

LEADING CHANGE: QUICK OVERVIEW

1. Create Urgency

For change to happen, it helps if the whole company really wants it. Develop a sense of urgency around the need for change.

What you can do:

- Identify potential threats, and develop scenarios showing what could happen in the future.
- Examine opportunities that should be, or could be, exploited.
- Start honest discussions, and give dynamic and convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking.
- Request support from customers, outside stakeholders and industry people to strengthen your argument.

2. Create a Powerful Coalition

Convince people that change is necessary. This often takes strong leadership and visible support from key people within your organization.

What you can do:

- Identify the true leaders in your organization, as well as your key stakeholders.
- Ask for an emotional commitment from these key people.
- Work on team building within your change coalition.
- Check your team for weak areas, and ensure that you have a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within your company.

3. Create a Vision for Change

Create an overall vision that people can grasp easily and remember. A clear vision can help everyone understand why you're asking them to do something.

What you can do:

- Determine the values that are central to the change.
- Develop a short summary (one or two sentences) that captures what you "see" as the future of your organization.
- Create a strategy to execute that vision.
- Ensure that your change coalition can describe the vision in five minutes or less.
- Practice your "vision speech" often.

4. Communicate the Vision

What you do with your vision after you create it will determine your success. Your message will probably have strong competition from other day-to-day communications, so you need to communicate it frequently and powerfully, and embed it within everything that you do.

What you can do:

- Talk often about your change vision.
- Address peoples' concerns and anxieties, openly and honestly.
- Apply your vision to all aspects of operations – from training to performance reviews. Tie everything back to the vision.
- Lead by example.

5. Remove Obstacles

Is anyone resisting the change? Are there processes or structures that are getting in its way? Removing obstacles can empower the people you need to execute your vision, and it can help the change move forward.

What you can do:

- Identify, or hire, change leaders whose main roles are to deliver the change.
- Look at your organizational structure, job descriptions, and performance and compensation systems to ensure they're in line with your vision.
- Recognize and reward people for making change happen.
- Identify people who are resisting the change, and help them see what's needed.
- Take action to quickly remove barriers (human or otherwise).

6. Create Short-Term Wins

Nothing motivates more than success. Give your school a taste of victory early in the change process. Within a short time frame (this could be a month or a year, depending on the type of change), you'll want to have some "quick wins" that your staff can see.

What you can do:

- Look for sure-fire projects that you can implement without help from any strong critics of the change.
- Don't choose early targets that are expensive. You want to be able to justify the investment in each project.
- Thoroughly analyze the potential pros and cons of your targets. If you don't succeed with an early goal, it can hurt your entire change initiative.
- Reward the people who help you meet the targets.

7. Build on the Change

Many change projects fail because victory is declared too early. Real change runs deep. Quick wins are only the beginning of what needs to be done to achieve long-term change.

What you can do:

- After every win, analyze what went right, and what needs improving.
- Set goals to continue building on the momentum you've achieved.
- Learn about continuous improvement.
- Keep ideas fresh by bringing in new change agents and leaders for your change coalition.

8. Anchor Change in the Organizational Culture

Finally, to make any change stick, it should become part of the core of your organization. Your school's culture often determines what gets done, so the values behind your vision must show in day-to-day work.

What you can do:

- Talk about progress every chance you get. Tell success stories about the change process, and repeat other stories that you hear.
- Include the change ideals and values when hiring and training new staff.
- Publicly recognize key members of your original change coalition, and make sure the rest of the staff – new and old – remembers their contributions.
- Create plans to replace key leaders of change as they move on. This will help ensure that their legacy is not lost or forgotten.

Source: Adapted from *Leading Change* by John Kotter, and Mindtools summary:

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_82.htm